



MONTHLY JULY 2005 UPDATE



♦ Empowering People ♦

◆ Maryland Youth Leadership Awards

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. presented four Maryland students with the **2005 Maryland Youth Disability Leadership Award** at a ceremony at the Maryland State House in Annapolis last month. A fifth student who received an award was unable to attend the ceremony.

The awards, presented on behalf of the Governor's Office and the **Maryland Department of Disabilities**, recognize leadership ability, community service, commitment and determination, and the ability to serve as a role model.

The following students received Governor's Citations and scholarships from the **Maryland Department of Disabilities** to further their educational or employment goals:

Ryan Nicholas Walsh of Gaithersburg, **First Place Winner**. He plans to attend Salisbury University and hopes to attend Georgetown Law School, becoming an attorney specializing in the rights of people with disabilities. A member of the JROTC, Ryan also tutors elementary school students and serves as a field agent for the American's with Disabilities Association.

Shannna M. Kunst of Owings Mills, **Honorable Mention Winner**. She plans to attend college and would like to become an X-ray technician.

Gregory Layne Miller of Owings Mills, **Honorable Mention Winner**. He plans to go to college and was the 2004 winner of the Baltimore County Student Advocate of the Year Award.

Logan Aalders of Mardela Springs, **Honorable Mention Winner**. He plans to attend Salisbury University. He has participated in numerous sports activities and earned a black belt in Taekwondo.

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Extreme & Adaptive Sports Expo

The **Maryland Department of Disabilities** and **Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks** will sponsor an **Extreme & Adaptive Sports Expo** (EASE) featuring athletes with disabilities on August 5 from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Representatives of the **Amped Riders Association** will perform skateboarding tricks and maneuvers at the event to be held at **Carroll Park in Baltimore City**. The day-long expo features demonstrations by the **Maryland Ravens** wheelchair basketball team, the **League of Dreams** wheelchair baseball team, therapeutic horseback riding and an appearance by **Paralympic Discus Gold Medal Champion Larry Hughes**.

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◆ Youth Leadership Awards

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Stefenie Taja Perry of Fort Washington, **Honorable Mention Winner**. She plans to attend college and would like to become a neurologist or psychologist.



Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. presents the 2005 Maryland Youth Disability Leadership Awards. Pictured are: front row, Ryan Nicholas Walsh –First Prize Winner; back row, left to right: Shanna M. Kunst, Gregory Layne Miller, Governor Ehrlich and Stefenie Perry.

◆ Governor Ehrlich receives ‘Freedom to Compete Award’ from Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. has been awarded one of the first-ever “**Freedom to Compete Awards**” from the U.S. **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**. The award, presented by **EEOC Chair Cari M. Dominguez** at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., recognizes “initiatives that promote fair and open competition in the workplace.”

Governor Ehrlich was one of six recipients nationwide and selected for his dedication to improving the lives of people with disabilities. In 2004, the Governor introduced legislation to elevate the existing Governor’s Office of Individuals with Disabilities to a cabinet-level department with budget and policy-making authority.

“**Before I was elected, I promised to make Maryland a national model for empowering individuals with disabilities,**” said Governor Ehrlich. “**With the creation of our Department of Disabilities, we have taken a big step toward that goal. I am deeply honored that the EEOC has recognized our efforts in Maryland. National recognition is a catalyst to encourage other states to make similar commitments to their citizens.**”

EEOC Chair Dominguez said of the awards: “**We honor companies, associations and people whose extraordinary efforts embody a key tenet of the Commission’s goals to ensure that all individuals have the freedom to compete and advance in the workplace on a level playing field.**”

The awards are part of the **Freedom to Compete Initiative**, a national outreach, education and coalition-building campaign launched in 2002. As part of the Freedom to Compete campaign, the EEOC has been forging strategic alliances and partnerships with a cross-section of stakeholders to influence positive change in the workplace.

The EEOC is the federal government agency responsible for enforcing the nation’s anti-discrimination laws in the workplace. More information about the EEOC and Freedom to Compete Award is available online at www.eeoc.gov.

◆ EASE

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This free event is *open to all* and geared to youth and teens to demonstrate the variety of *athletic talent possessed by individuals with disabilities*.

Performers from Amped Riders, all amputees, have been featured in national magazines and the League of Dreams has been featured on national television.

Volunteers are needed to make this unique event a success. Contact Stephanie Murdock at 410-767-3663 or smurdock@mdod.state.md.us or Ellis Goodman at 410-767-3656 or egoodman@mdod.state.md.us to volunteer or for more information.

